

# IEP Partner Service

Raising Special Kids

Arizona's Parent Training and Information Center

2014



# IEP Partner Service

- More districts are coming in contact with IEP Partners
- PEA personnel often mistake IEP Partners as ‘advocates’
- Parents often assume IEP Partner is a way to obtain a ‘free advocate’
- Community partners that refer families often have a misunderstanding of the IEP Partner service (e.g. Behavioral Health Case Managers, DDD Support Coordinators, CPS Case Workers, Support Groups, other non-profit organizations)

# IDEA 2004

- Part D--NATIONAL ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES
  - Section 671—Parent Training and Information Centers
    - (b) Required Activities.
      - (1) Provide training and information that meets the needs of parents of children with disabilities living in the area served by the center, particularly underserved parents and parents of children who may be inappropriately identified

# Where does the IEP Partner service fit?

- (4) assist parents to—
  - (B) communicate effectively and work collaboratively with personnel responsible for providing special education, early intervention services, transition services and related services;
  - (C) participate in decision making processes and the development of individualized education programs under part B and individualized family service plans under part C;
  - (F) participate in activities at the school level that benefit their children;

# Other Required PTI Activities

- (6) assist parents in resolving disputes in the most expeditious and effective way possible, including encouraging the use, and explaining the benefits, of alternative methods of dispute resolution, such as the mediation process described in section 615(e);
- (8) assist parents to understand the availability of, and how to effectively use, procedural safeguards under this title, including the resolution session described in section 615(e)
- (9) assist parents in understanding, preparing for, and participating in, the process described in section 615(f)(1)(B);

# Purpose of the IEP Partner

- Increase parent knowledge and skills in self-advocacy
- Offer support in resolving problems and reaching solutions
- Increase the parent's ability to obtain appropriate services and supports for the student

# Highest Level of Support

IEP Partner service protocols and procedures are in place to:

- Educate participants on the service
- Coordinate and communicate appropriately with the IEP team
- Use best practices in the IEP process
- Evaluate the service

# Selection Criteria for IEP Partner

Special consideration is given for the following:

- Parent is unsuccessful or ineffective at participating in the IEP meeting after completing PTI training and consultation
- Parent has an identified or suspected disability, or significant cultural barrier that hinders appropriate participation in the IEP Process
- PTI identified a trend or systemic PEA issue broadly affecting other parents and students



# Additional Consideration

- Custodial grandparent raising a child (or children) with a disability
- Youth or young adult that has reached the age of majority
- PEA requests for assistance

# Responsibility of the IEP Partner

- Before IEP meeting:
  - meets with parent; review documentation; assist in developing a plan for the parent to appropriately state concerns and propose solutions in collaborative decision-making
  - encourages parent to share, or share on the parent's behalf, the concerns and proposals with the meeting facilitator so that all parties are prepared to discuss the needs and issues
  - communicates with the meeting facilitator and provides IEP Partner service disclaimer

# Safeguards for Parents

## IEP Partner Agreement

- Requires parent signature of acknowledgement before IEP Partner can attend a meeting
  - Clearly outlines the role of the IEP Partner as “training in self-advocacy”
  - Delineates the difference between IEP Partner and an attorney or advocate
  - Describes what is required of the parent

# Safeguards for Schools

## IEP Partner Service Disclaimer

- Provide this document to the meeting facilitator prior to the IEP meeting
  - Introduces and identifies the role of the IEP Partner
  - Clarifies the difference between an Advocate/Attorney and IEP Partner

# Responsibility of the IEP Partner

- At IEP meeting:
  - assists parent in effectively communicating their concerns, ideas, and solutions as an equal member of the team
  - models for the parent, and the team, if necessary, appropriate communication and problem-solving skills for collaboration with IEP team members
  - assists the parent in understanding how to appropriately express disagreement, if necessary; demonstrates and reinforces the benefit of resolving disputes
  - explains the evaluation process to the parent and the school official to assess the performance of the IEP Partner

# Evaluation of the Service

Y/N

1. Did the IEP Partner clearly explain their role as the IEP Partner?

Likert scale (1 – 5=highest)

2. Usefulness in supporting appropriate parent involvement on the IEP team.

3. Knowledge in understanding the requirements of IDEA and the role of the IEP team.

4. Effectiveness in helping the team reach agreement.

5. How likely are you to recommend the IEP Partner to other families?

# Evaluation Data 2.5 years

Parents and Professionals (**n = 162**)

Likert scale **1 – 5=highest**

- Usefulness in supporting appropriate parent involvement on the IEP team.
  - **4.85**
- Knowledge in understanding the requirements of IDEA and the role of the IEP team.
  - **4.89**
- Effectiveness in helping the team reach agreement.
  - **4.84**

# Evaluation Method

- Option 1 (preferred)
  - Raising Special Kids management sends parent and school official (preferably the meeting facilitator) an electronic survey link after the IEP meeting
- Option 2
  - Upon request, or if the parent does not have access to the internet, a paper evaluation and prepaid envelope will be provided



# Management Contacts



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